

March 1, 2020

Morning Overview

Lesson: *Wandering: The Golden Calf*

Lesson Objective:

This week we study when the Israelites turn to worship a golden calf. It's a very sad story since it's not long after God had taken His people out of Egypt. They had seen God work miracles, meet their needs, and deliver them time and time again. Yet, as the hymn goes, "Prone to wander...prone to leave the God I love." What happened to Israel happens to us; we leave the God who rescues us for something that cannot save us. God will not tolerate his people giving themselves to objects made by their own hands. God swiftly corrects, guides, and brings His people – yes, you and me – back to Himself. As the Lord testifies about Himself, "The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin... (Exodus 34:6-7)."

Teaching Points:

- God is faithful and never changes. God keeps His promises.
- God is sovereign (or in control).
- Man is sinful.
- God is kind and merciful.
- God is everywhere all the time.
- God communicates with man.
- God wants people to know He is a great God.
- God is holy. God wants His people to be holy.
- God is all knowing.
- God does not need any help.
- God saves His people.
- God provides for His people.

Scripture: Exodus 32-40; Leviticus 1-3, Numbers 9

Story: *Vos Child's Story Bible*, Pages 79-85; *Gospel Story Book Bible*, Pages 70-76;
The Beginner's Gospel Story Bible, Pages 76-83; *The Beginner's Bible*, Page 127

Scripture Memory for March:

"It is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess." Deuteronomy 32:47

It is no (cross arms to make an "X")

Empty word (use hand to make a puppet and talk)

For you, but your very life, (point at audience)

And by this word you shall live long (put both hands together and then move apart till arms are stretched out)

In the land that you are going over the Jordan (use one hand-arm to make hill or mountain motions)

To possess (take one hand and act as though you are putting a stake in the ground).

Craft: Golden Calf

Supplies: Cardstock calf, red "X", glitter glue, scripture reference sticker

Instructions:

1. Attach scripture reference sticker to top of page.
2. Use paint brushes to add a thin layer of gold glitter glue to the calf face – monitor the kids painting to prevent too much from being applied (it won't dry in time).
glue will be delivered in bowls to the classrooms for kids to share
3. Place red X over 'golden calf' (the glitter glue will cause the X to stay in place)



If child has already done craft first hour, have them work on a coloring sheet

Story

Review

The Lord had saved His people from Pharaoh and the Egyptian army. Crossing the Red Sea on dry ground was a miracle and only God was powerful enough for it to happen. God's people saw the great work God had done. They knew God had saved them. The Bible says after the Red Sea closed and Pharaoh's army was defeated, the Israelites had a great big celebration. God saving His people would change them for forever. God gave His people commandments. These 10 commandments were the way God wanted His people to worship and follow Him. While God was giving these commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai, the Israelites made a very terrible decision.

Israel Forgets

Moses had gone up to Mount Sinai to receive the 10 commandments from God. But it had been a long time since he went up there. The people were waiting, waiting, and waiting, but Moses was not coming down. They were getting restless and impatient. So, the Israelites went to Moses' brother, Aaron, and said, "Let's just make a god that we can follow. That man, Moses, who brought us out of Egypt, we don't know what happened to him!" This was a very, very bad thing. The Lord told his people, 'I am the Lord, your God' in the first commandment and not to make idols in the third commandment. God didn't want his children, the Israelites, to make anything ever and call it their god. Even worse, the Israelites remembered their rescue from Egypt all wrong! Had Moses saved them? No! It was God that rescued them and led them out of Egypt. God had done all the miracles, but the Israelites seemed to have forgotten that.

The Golden Calf

The Bible tells us Aaron listened to the Israelites and did a terrible thing. He might have been afraid that the people would get mad at him, but we don't know. Aaron said to the men and women "Give me your golden earrings." The Israelites brought their gold earrings and other gold things to Aaron. Aaron built a huge fire. He then put all the golden earrings in a large bowl, put the bowl into the fire and the gold became very hot so that it became soft like liquid. Aaron was able to take the hot gold and mold it into a calf, or a baby cow. When the golden calf was finished, the people pointed to it and said, "This is our God. This brought us out of the land of Egypt!" Then the Bible says Aaron made an altar in front of this calf and the next day the people brought offerings to the calf. The people worshipped the golden calf. The golden calf that used to be their earrings! This became a big party. Despite their fun, the Israelites had sinned against God.

God Sees

The Israelites had disobeyed God. They worshipped something else that was not alive but was just a statute. God's people had sinned. Before Moses went up to Sinai, the Israelites had promised to obey God. Now they were breaking his rules. They were worshipping an idol, a golden calf, that they had made! Moses was on the mountain with God. He couldn't see or hear what was going on. But you know what? (Lean forward toward the children and speak softly). God could. He knew exactly what was going on at the bottom of the mountain with that golden calf. The Bible says God was very angry, and said to Moses, "The people have turned away from Me. They have made themselves a golden calf, and there's an altar in front of the calf. The people are giving offerings to the calf and they're saying, 'This is our god that brought us out of Egypt!'"

Moses Intercedes

God was angry, and rightfully so. God rescued the Israelites so they could worship Him, but instead they worshipped something that was not alive. God could have destroyed Israel that day if He wanted. That could have been the end of them! But the Bible says Moses pleaded with the Lord. That means Moses prayed to God for the Israelites. Moses asked God to please keep the promise He had made to be their God. The Lord listened to Moses and He didn't destroy Israel.

Moses Reacts

God had written his Ten Commandments on two stone tablets. Moses picked up the stones and hurried down the mountain. He wanted to show God's people what God had said and that they had broken their promise to God. But when Moses saw that golden calf and when he saw the people worshipping it, the Bible says he took the stone tablets and threw them down on the ground. Moses broke the tablets into lots and lots of pieces.

God Forgives

The Bible says God punished the people for their sin (don't offer the information, but if the children ask, tell them many people died). But God kept his promise. He still loved them and forgave them. And then he told Moses "Cut two tablets of stone, like the first ones, and I will write on these the words that were on the first tables which you broke." God gave the people the Ten Commandments again on two new stone tablets. Our God is loving and forgiving!

Building God's House

God was going to help His people not to forget Him. To do that, God was going to have His people build Him a house. God is everywhere and bigger than any house ever made. By building a house for God, it would give the Israelites a place to worship Him. God gave very specific instructions to Moses on how to build His house. Moses got all of God's people together and said, "We are going to build a house for the Lord. God has told me how it must be built. We will need nice pieces of cloth, gold, silver, brass, precious jewels, oil and sweet spices. Anyone who wants to help can bring these gifts to me." The Israelites were really happy to have a place to worship God. The people brought many of these things and builders started working on God's house. Women made curtains; men cut and carved wood, melted metal, and fitted different pieces together. Other people made furniture to go in God's house and others made clothes for the priests to wear. Priests were the people who helped others worship God, they took care of God's house, and they lead God's people in worshipping Him. God decided that Moses' brother, Aaron, would be the high priest. The high priest was in charge of God's house and told the other priests how to take care of God's house.

God's House Is A Big Tent

God's house was not like a house you or I live in, and it was not like a church either. It was a really, really big tent. God's house had to be a tent because they were travelling so much; God's people did not stay in one place for too long. God's people were travelling back to the Promised Land and had to move a lot. Only certain people were allowed to come into God's house – the priests – and everyone else had to stay outside.

There were lots of different things God had in his house. God's house had places where priests could clean themselves before going to worship Him. There were places where people gave offerings to God because they wanted to show they loved Him. And other places were very special because only God was allowed to be in that part of the house.

God's house was very pretty and decorated with very precious things. The tent was made out of fine cloth and was colored blue, red and purple; it was decorated with angels too. Inside, where only the priests could go, was a very large box called the Ark of the Covenant. Inside of this very large box were the Ten Commandments. It was very beautiful. Only priests were allowed to pick up the ark, it was very special, and God only wanted certain people to touch it.

God's House is Complete

After the Israelites finished building God's House, Moses wanted to have a special time in celebrating God's House. He carried around oil and sprinkled some on the new furniture, curtains and, well, everything. This was special because it meant these things were only to be used to worship God. Moses then lit some candles and placed special bread on an altar. After Moses had done all of this, a very large cloud came over God's House and then a burst of

light filled it. The Israelites saw this, as they were standing there, and were happy to see God was with them. When God was ready for His people to move, the cloud would start to move, and the people would pack up God's House (remember, it's a big tent) and follow the cloud.

God's People Worship Him

God gave his people instructions on how to worship Him. God wanted His people to sing songs, pray, dance and learn about Him in a way that He thought was best. The Israelites followed God's rules. One of the rules was how to offer to God good gifts. This showed God that the Israelites loved Him and wanted to follow Him. The way in which the Israelites worshipped God showed their love for Him. But more importantly, it reminded the Israelites of God's great love for them!

Questions for Review with Younger Children

Have the kids answer "Yes" if it is true, or "no" with the correct answer if it is false.

- God's people were in bondage in Egypt. (Yes)
- God left His people in Egypt. (No! God rescued them and took them out of Egypt).
- God told Moses to tell the people to obey His commandments. (Yes)
- The Israelites were very patient and waited for Moses to come down. (No! They were impatient!)
- The Israelites made a golden calf to worship instead of God. (Yes)
- God was very angry that the Israelites were worshipping the golden calf. (Yes)
- Moses did not break the tablets the 10 commandments were on. (No! He did break them!)
- God gave Moses specific instructions on how to make a house of worship. (Yes)
- God's house was like a gingerbread house. You could eat it. (No! God's house was made out of precious and expensive things.)
- Priests were special people that helped the Israelites worship God. (Yes)
- God's house had to stay in place. It could not move. (No! It was a big tent and moved whenever the cloud moved.)
- God wants us to worship and love Him. (Yes)